



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEXICAN CITIZEN SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS FOR ILLEGAL REENTRY AFTER DEPORTATION AND ESCAPE

TUCSON – Juan Martin Romero-Rios, 40, of Nayarit, Mexico, was sentenced here to a total of 84 months, by visiting U.S. District Judge Marvin Aspen. Romero-Rios had pleaded guilty on December 6, 2006 to a two-count indictment charging him with illegal reentry after deportation and escape.

On December 16, 2005, Romero-Rios and a second individual had been apprehended when Organ Pipe National Monument rangers conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle driven by Romero-Rios, who identified himself as Mario Gutierrez-Torres and reported that he was a temporary resident alien who was not in possession of his immigration documents. The second individual provided conflicting information, so the rangers contacted United States Border Patrol agents for assistance. A search of the vehicle revealed a box of 9mm ammunition hidden in the taillight access area of the trunk. Also found in the vehicle were a loaded 9mm handgun and a glass pipe containing residue which subsequently tested positive for methamphetamine. Romero-Rios attempted to escape during the search of the vehicle but was apprehended and detained in the back of a Border Patrol service vehicle. Romero-Rios then attempted to escape from the Border Patrol vehicle into the desert. Agents pursued Romero-Rios and were able to intercept and restrain him. He was then transported to the Ajo Border Patrol station where it was determined that he had provided officers with a false name and had an extensive criminal and immigration history. It was also determined that the 9mm firearm found in the vehicle was reported stolen out of Phoenix. On December 18, 2005, while still in Border Patrol custody, Romero-Rios successfully escaped from the Ajo Border Patrol station.

On July 24, 2006, Romero-Rios was once again apprehended by a United States Border Patrol agent on routine patrol near Ajo, Arizona. He was observed walking on State Route 85 with a second individual, and he identified himself as Juan Rios-Meza and acknowledged that he had illegally entered the United States on July 22, 2006 near Lukeville, Arizona. A Border Patrol agent working at the Ajo processing center recognized Romero-Rios as the same person who had escaped from the Ajo Border Patrol station on December 18, 2005.

At his sentencing hearing, Romero-Rios was sentenced to 84 months for illegal reentry after deportation and to a concurrent 60 months for escape.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the United States Border Patrol and the National Park Service. The prosecution was handled by Claire K. Lefkowitz, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

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